

Political Aspect of Oklahoma Rate Fight

(George McQuaid, in Dallas News)

It has generally been considered good politics to deliver benefits directly to the people and to collect tribute indirectly. There is a political theory in Oklahoma to the effect that the 2c passenger fares, which the Constitution of this State fixed upon the railroads, are calculated to please the people, regardless of the minor item of justice to the railroads. Every once in a while this theory gets bolstered in a persuasive manner.

Some figures have recently been compiled by the Corporation Commission, and given circulation which make what seems to be a sophisticated argument for prolonging the 2c rate litigation that has been pending in the Federal Court at Oklahoma City almost seven years. These figures bring out the conclusion that the people of Oklahoma who ride upon passenger trains are saving a great deal of money while the case is undecided, for the reason that the 2c passenger rate remains in effect pending a decision.

Shippers Are Exercised
Shippers in Oklahoma have become somewhat exercised over the apparent status of the rate litigation and especially since the railroads have amended their bills to bring freight rates into issue. The shippers have noted that the Interstate Commerce Commission has granted an interstate rate of 2.6c a mile in Kansas and Missouri territory contiguous to Oklahoma and they believe that such a rate would be justified in Oklahoma. The political feature of the rate situation may be assumed to have caused some of the anxiety that is present in the minds of these shippers. The freight charge is indirect, while passenger fares are paid right out of the pockets of the passengers.

The statement issued by the Corporation Commission is to the effect that any person who has ridden on the trains in Oklahoma during the period in which the 2c fares have been in force, for a distance of eight

miles or more, has received back his share of the cost of litigating the rates as represented by the appropriations made by the State for this defense, measured on a per capita basis. Of course the revenues of the State are not collected on a per capita basis, but this trifling inconsistency is not considered in making up the disingenuous showing referred to by the Commission.

Contributions by Counties.
A paragraph in the laudatory contribution to current literature in Oklahoma as handed out by the Corporation Commission is as follows:

"The minimum contribution of 3c applies in Latimer and LeFlore counties, while 4c applies in Adair, Cole, Delaware, Haskell, McClain, McCurtain, Murray, Pittsburg, Seminole, and Sequoyah Counties. The maximum of 17c applies only in Grant County, 16c only in Washington County, and there being only eleven other counties among the seventy-five of the State where the per capita amount is higher than 10c. The total assessed valuation of the State is \$1,187,164,328. The public service property valuation of the State is \$225,056,170. The latter is 22.48 per cent of the former. On this relation \$37,554.40 of the total \$175,000 appropriated is paid by the public service corporations, leaving \$137,445.60 to be paid by the taxpayers of the State other than public service corporations, which on the 1910 State population of 1,657,155 develops the average per capita contribution of 8.2c."

Nothing as to Reasonableness
It is characteristic of this opportunist theorem that there is no allegation of the reasonableness of the compensatory character of the rate that is pointed out as a money saver for the people. It is apparently deemed sufficient that a showing can be made that there has been a saving in money to people who travel never so little. That the cost of the litigation has been about \$200,000 to the State and the saving to the people who travel has been about \$11,000,000 is all that a politician seems to be able to see.

This line of reasoning has been rejected by some of the newspapers of Oklahoma and has been pointed to as unfortunate by others. The weak place in it is the circumstances that it takes into consideration no factors to show whether owners of the physical assets of the carriers are getting returns on the value of their property or on the cost of reproducing their property new.

The case is in the courts. It is the theory of the State, of course, that it will be possible to show that the 2c fare is either compensatory or reasonable within the light of decided cases. On that theory the case ought to be litigated and the State may be expected to spend of its revenues sufficient funds to pay the cost of such litigation. That is but the plight of the State and the duty of the State officers to the people. But the argument is made that it pays to keep the case in court for the saving that is made to those who travel.

"Passengers Vote; Freight Doesn't."
The attitude of the Corporation Commission of Oklahoma in this litigation is reminiscent of a proposition made some time ago by Seth Low to the effect that "passengers vote, and freight does not." Injection of the freight rates by the railroads into this case has at once stored the shippers of Oklahoma into efforts to preserve the present rates on freight. The shippers know that there is likely to be something done as a result of an effort on the part of the carriers to show in one action that the total of revenue is neither reasonable nor compensatory to the railroads.

The shippers are apparently not anxious to see the railroads reduce their passenger earnings \$2,000,000 and increase their freight rates by \$4,000,000, or something larger than the reductions on the passenger earnings.

In his discussion of the rate question, Mr. Low advocated reduction of passenger fares to a cent a mile and increase of freight rates to make up for this deficit. In this he echoed a suggestion made by President Underwood of the Erie Railway and other lesser railroad luminaries. It was pointed out by Mr. Low that wherever railroads are publicly owned, the passenger fares are made low and the freight rates high.

Example of Germany.
In Germany, before the present war, the passenger fares were about one half what they are in Oklahoma, while the freight rates were about four times as much. The people, of course, pay both these, but the former is a direct charge, while the latter is an indirect tax. What happens where railroads are publicly owned is likely to occur in a less degree, perhaps, in States where the railroads are to a great extent controlled by the State. Under the terms of the Oklahoma Constitution the Corporation Commission of this State has a rather robust grip upon the destinies of the railroads. The politically opportunist thing, keeping in view the

fact that passengers have votes and freight has not, would be to pander to the passengers.

Probably the framers of the Constitution in Oklahoma had no thought that the freight earnings of the railroads might be made to carry a deficit caused by low passenger rates. It may even be that 2c is compensatory for passenger business in Oklahoma. The interesting thing in the situation is the defense of the litigation on the theory that the people who ride on trains are saving money many times greater in amount than the people who pay the taxes are contributing to keep the litigation going.

It is interestingly worthy of note that the Interstate Commerce Commission has held that rates may be made on the principle suggested. Its ruling has been that each branch of the service shall earn its own income. In view of the gradual recession of State control throughout the Union and of the gradual growth of centralized regulation, it would seem improbable that there can come any permanent construction of rates in Oklahoma based upon the opportunist theory of the politicians.

VACCINATING MANY HOGS

Farm Agent L. H. Fash is receiving many requests to vaccinate hogs against cholera. Sunday he went to the farm of Dr. Calvert, where he vaccinated forty head, and later he rendered immune several hundred head for others in the county. It is a recognized fact that vaccination is the only sure preventive for cholera, and farmers having many hogs will do the wise thing to take this preventive measure. The cost is light and it is mighty good insurance.

JOHNSTON DIVERSIFIES

Henry Johnston will farm 400 acres of land this year. He has 150 acres of wheat, will plant 100 acres of corn and a lot of kafir, oats, etc. Extensive and intensive farming is the kind Mr. Johnston goes in for. He diversifies his crop and runs but little risk of failure. His next equipment will be an automobile. —Custer Courier, (western Oklahoma).

CALOMEL DYNAMITES A SLUGGISH LIVER

Crashes into your bile, making you sick and you lose a day's work.

Calomel salivates! It's mercury. Calomel acts like dynamite on a sluggish liver. When calomel comes into contact with your bile it crashes into it, causing cramping and nausea.

If you feel bilious, constipated, and all knocked out, just go to the druggist and get a fifty-cent bottle of Dodson's Liver Tonic, which is a harmless vegetable substitute for dangerous calomel. Take a teaspoonful and if it doesn't start your liver and straighten you up better and quicker than nasty calomel and with out making you sick, you just go back and get your money.

If you take calomel today you will be sick and nauseated tomorrow; besides, it may salivate you, while if you take Dodson's Liver Tonic you will wake up feeling great, full of ambition and ready for work or play. It's harmless, pleasant, and safe to give to the children; they like it. —Advertisement.

There's one satisfactory feature to this defensively armed merchantmen discussion. The ex-presidents have contributed very little to it.

POOR COTTON SEED

DEPARTMENT WARNS FARMERS AGAINST INFERIOR GRADE OF SEED COTTON

Washington, March 15.—The Department of Agriculture, on April 9, 1914, and again on March 2, 1915, issued warnings to the farmers of the Southwest against planting varieties of cotton that usually produce a staple of less than seven-eighths inch in length, especially such varieties as are said to produce half seed and half lint. In view of the approaching planting season, the Department wishes to reiterate these warnings for the benefit of the entire cotton belt. The producers of cotton, for their own welfare, should heed this advice, and should exercise judicious care in the selection of planting seed.

The following reasons are given for warning cotton growers against planting any variety that usually produces a staple of less than seven eighths of an inch in length.

1. Cotton of less than seven-eighths inch staple is approximately the same spinning value as the bulk of the cotton of India. On economic principles, the American product should be maintained on a higher level of intrinsic worth than that of India, in order that the American crop may not be forced to compete in the markets of the world with the cotton from India.


2. Cotton of less than seven-eighths of an inch staple is inferior to the average American quality, and localities that produce such cotton in appreciable quantities soon establish reputations for an inferior product. The price of all cotton in such markets will suffer on account of the poor reputation of the market.

3. Competent cotton buyers discriminate against extremely short staple whenever such cotton is discovered. They should be equally careful to discriminate in favor of cotton of good staple. The farmer who produces inferior cotton is likely to find that his product brings a price materially lower than quotations would indicate as its true value. The seller commonly looks upon such discrimination as a penalty, while the buyer considers that he is paying the full value for an inferior commodity.

4. Under the common practice of the cotton trade, the price of spot cotton is governed largely by future quotations. In order that future quotations might more accurately reflect the value of spot cotton, Congress, in the United States Cotton Futures Act, provided a form of contract, exempt from the tax imposed by the Act, on which cotton of extremely low grade or which is less than seven-eighths of an inch in length of staple is not deliverable. This action by Congress was intended primarily for the benefit of producers. One of its results was the adoption by the New York and New Orleans Exchanges of the exempted form of future contract, so that cotton of less than seven-eighths of an inch in length staple cannot be delivered thereon. This legislation in no way effects any sale of spot cotton in the country.

5. As the variety of seed planted is the primary factor in determining length of staples, and as there are early maturing prolific varieties which produce a staple of at least an inch in length, no farmer or community is justified in planting an inferior variety, or in expecting the full market price for a debased article of commerce.

See E. M. Evans for Typewriters.



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Mr. John G. Gendall, Franklin, La., suffered with stomach trouble for several years. He did not know what his trouble was. He was unable to work. Could hardly eat anything. After taking Peruna a short time he is now in perfect health. He says: "I am now doing all my work. I am confident that any one suffering as I was could be cured by Peruna."

Every Change of Weather.
Mr. E. Arnold, Westbury, B. I., contracted a severe cold. The cold settled in his side and produced a condition that was thought to be pleurisy. Every change of weather would bring a return of his trouble. After taking Peruna all his ailments have vanished.

Pain in the Stomach.
Mr. Henry Knack, Box 330, No. 3118 E. Vista Ave., Jonesville, Wis., writes: "I wrote you about four weeks ago that I had a pain in my stomach. I followed your advice, and used three bottles of your Peruna, and I am all right now. I am very thankful for your advice and your medicine."

Three substantial men, heads of families, made efficient once more by Peruna. Three housewives restored to their families. These are only examples of what Peruna is doing every day, everywhere. Surely, this is a splendid work. Anything that conserves family life and makes the home more desirable and comfortable, nourishes the heart root of civilization. Peruna is a great civilizer.

OATS LOOKING FINE

A representative of the News spent some time in the country the end of the week, and is glad to be able to report that in the section visited oats are up and looking fine. In most of the fields visited the stand is good and, barring a freeze, a good yield ought to be made this year. The oats are needing a rain, however, but can go a little while longer without it and will not suffer much damage. The average, according to the best information at hand is fully fifty per cent more in the county than last year. The corn average will also be large.

PLANT A PATCH OF PEANUTS

Peanuts are a sure feed crop of great value, especially useful on the farms where there is no alfalfa. If planted in May and June they mature in the early fall. The crop may be harvested, stacked, picked and sold. But it is better, after saving enough for seed and an ample supply for the children, to let the hogs do the harvesting. While gathering the peanuts, the hogs should be fed kafir, milo, feterita or corn to balance the ration and to harden their flesh. The Spanish is the variety for Oklahoma and grows luxuriantly in all sections of the State.

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BACKACHE AND QUACKERY

Reports from the European war causes that in case the symptoms are prolonged and painful it is the part of wisdom to consult a good physician. Backache may be due to muscular strain or lack of balance, to inflammation of the nerves, or to infection. Only a competent and trustworthy physician should be consulted. Probably a better portion of the human body is more preyed upon by quackery.

BENEFITS OF THE OPEN LIFE

Reports from the European war front are to the effect that exposure to windless or stagnant air is more harmful than exposure to cold weather. It is asserted as a matter of fact that variations of temperature in which people are prone to protect themselves are beneficial when reasonably indulged. It was found that men accustomed to sedentary lives in confined atmosphere, gained in appetite, growth and color under exposure.


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